



The Arlington Advocate



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68 PAGES 3 SECTIONS

Survey pleases Symmes

BY LINDSEY BLAIVAS
STAFF WRITER

Patients at Symmes Hospital & Medical Center know their doctors and don't get lost in the big-city hospital maze.

That's the news coming out of a recent statewide survey of 12,680 patients who were treated at 58 hospitals in Massachusetts.

Symmes Hospital scored in the 90th percentile, the highest in the state, in the category of patient preference, according to the survey released by a Harvard University-based health care coalition.

The survey is the first of its kind. It posed 60 questions to randomly-selected patients discharged from the voluntarily participating hospitals between January and March of last year.

"The questions were not about treatment outcome," said Julie Corwin, Symmes director of public affairs. "They concentrated on the patients and how they felt; for instance did they feel like they understood their treatment and did the staff always respect them and educate them."

It is the first time in the country that hospitals from across a state voluntarily participated in a survey project using a consistent methodology and agreed to make the results available to the public.

"I must admit it is a very scary thing," said Corwin, "but it is well worth while. This study has given us the knowledge to improve the areas we need improvement in."

Symmes Hospital respondents were primarily from Arlington and Lexington. The categories they were asked to respond to were: respect for patient preferences, coordination of care, information and education, physical comfort, emotional support, involvement of family and friends, and continuity and transition.

Corwin said that Symmes scored the highest in patient preference because patients feel close to and comfortable with their doctors.

"It is one of the benefits of a community hospital," said Corwin, "Our patients talk directly to their doctors. The doctors know their patients on a personal basis, they explain treatment and

SEE SYMMES, PAGE 12

Case closed in \$1.9 million theft

Second Arlington man given federal sentence in fraud scheme

BY SUSAN DANSEYAR
STAFF WRITER

A federal judge sentenced an Arlington native to nearly four years imprisonment for his part in the theft of \$1.9 million from a Rockland chemical company.

Thomas Aldred, 39, now of Tewksbury, was sentenced Nov. 12 in U.S. District Court in Boston to three years and 10 months in prison. Aldred and his partner in the scheme, Neil Coiley of Grand View Road, pleaded guilty in the spring to establishing a sham corporation called Pure Chem, Inc. which existed solely for the purpose of processing fictitious shipments of chemical supplies to TACC International Corporation.

TACC is a chemical manufacturer where Aldred worked for six years, most recently as plant manager.

U.S. District Judge George O'Toole also ordered Aldred to pay \$1.9 million to TACC, serve three years of supervised release once he completes his prison term, submit to a drug test within 15 days of his release and enter a mental health program for gamblers. His sentence, O'Toole said, was within the mid-range of the federal sentencing guidelines, reflecting prior offenses of a similar nature.

Coiley, with no prior convictions, was sentenced on Sept. 28 to 18 months of home confinement and was also ordered to pay \$1.9 million in restitution to TACC.

According to U. S. Attorney David K. Stern, Aldred abused his role as a trusted and valued plant manager of TACC from early 1993 to November 1997, manipulating the chemical manufacturer's internal accounting controls and its inventory software to ensure that the fraudulent Pure Chem invoices were paid in full.

Aldred and Coiley set the stage for the scheme by initially arranging for a handful of actual chemical shipments by Pure Chem in 1993, Stern said. Once Pure Chem was established as a legitimate vendor of TACC, Aldred began processing fictitious shipments by forging delivery documents and preparing other paperwork that caused TACC to pay the invoices it received from Pure Chem. For almost

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De Ama Battle and Ryan Edwards, member of The Art of Black Dance and Music ensemble, perform at Arlington High School Monday morning.

Diversity in dancing

African dance class offered at Arlington High

BY LINDSEY BLAIVAS
STAFF WRITER

Arlington High School students were moving to the beat of a different drummer, as the sounds of African djembes filled the Lowe Auditorium this week.

Thirty-five students have signed up for an African Dance class, which is being offered at the high school on the recommendation of students interested in cultural diversity.

Monday the Art of Black Dance and Music Inc., the com-

pany hired to teach the class, came to the school to perform a short introduction to African dance.

"The dance was more than just an expression of feelings," said Talia Galasso, an 11th grade student. "It displayed great respect and honor for life. The intense beat could be felt in your soul and the traditional rhythms echo into many of today's musical traditions."

The idea of an African dance class was introduced by the International Club — a subcommittee of the Cultural Diver-

SEE DANCE, PAGE 12

School parents prepped for MCAS results

BY LINDSEY BLAIVAS
STAFF WRITER

School officials met with parents Tuesday night to prepare them for the release of MCAS test scores, which could be low.

Supt. Kathleen Donovan and Joanne Gurry, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, hosted the session and will meet with parents again tonight to help them understand what to expect from these much anticipated scores.

"I do not expect these results to be wonderful," Donovan said at the start of the meeting. "For years we have been teaching our kids a certain way. We have prepared them for certain kinds of tests. But this is a new situation. It is a different way of testing, writing, and understanding."

While the date for release of the test is not firmly set, local administrators expect to have the results by Nov. 30 and will release them to parents within five days.

The MCAS test was introduced last year for the first time as a practice test. It measures performance by the Massachusetts curriculum framework which, Donovan explained, Arlington just received one year ago.

"We are now aligning our curriculum with this new framework but it is imperative for everyone to understand that we cannot expect our children to score in the "Advanced" or "Proficient" category" when they have only had the curriculum for less than eight months," said Donovan.

"When you are in the tenth grade, after having ten years of this curriculum, then you will do well."

This year \$400,000 went into professional development for the teachers to help them learn and understand the new frameworks.

Because schools have just begun the process of matching what they teach to the new state standards, Donovan said the results are just one measure of achievement, but clearly not the only one or even the most important measure of a student's achievement.

Last year when the results from the practice MCAS tests came back they were looked at very carefully. The questions that every student got right were thrown out and the questions that every student got wrong were also thrown out. The remaining questions were the ones used on the new tests.

"As you can tell, the tests themselves are being tested," Donovan said.

There are seven frameworks: English, language, arts, science and technology, history and social science, and mathematics. Last year English, math, and

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WORKING
A HELP WANTED SECTION WORTH EMPLOYING



Elizabeth Kolb, left, and Kenna Leach, both 12, make doll furniture out of recycled materials at Arlington Recycles Day in Town Hall Saturday.

PHOTO BY ELLEN BULLOCK

Recycles Day draws crowd

BY SARAH BOLLINGER
SPECIAL TO THE ADVOCATE

Improving the "demand side" — getting the public to buy products made from recycled paper, metal and plastics — was the main message at the first annual Arlington Recycles Day held at the Town Hall Saturday and sponsored by the Arlington Recycling Committee and local businesswa.

"We have to get people to put their money where their mouth is," Eric Friedman said, motioning toward a display of several new products made from recycled plastics.

"Buying stimulates collection, and that saves resources," he said. "In the 90s we have come to see that unless we create demand, recycling will not work. We have to close the loop."

From all reports, Arlington is doing a good job of the first stage — collecting recycled material. The town recently received an "A" rating from the state for a 30-per-

cent recycling rate. While 20,500 tons of trash was sent to the incinerator, the town recycled more than 4,000 tons of paper and 900 tons of metal, glass and plastics, and collected more than 3,700 tons of yard waste for composting from July 1, 1997 to June 30, 1998. The goal is to recycle 46 percent by the year 2000.

Hundreds of Arlington Recycles Day visitors learned about new products made from recycled materials while they enjoyed Ben and Jerry's ice cream cones, snacks and freshly squeezed orange juice from Wild Harvest.

Antony Taylor, 6, who attends the Brackett School, was an early winner of a T-shirt with a recycling message. Throughout the day dozens of shirts and tote bags were awarded. All raffle tickets will also be submitted to a national raffle, which will give away a motor bike, a kayak, a trip to Disney World and a house made of recycled mate-

SEE RECYCLING, PAGE 16

MEETINGS

November 19

Council on Aging Board of Directors, 7:15 p.m., Senior Association Conference Room, Arlington Senior Center, 27 Maple St.

Arlington Conservation Commission, 7:30 p.m., DPW conference room, second floor, Town Hall, Annex

November 24

Capital Planning Committee, 4 p.m., first floor conference room, Town Hall Annex

Arlington School Committee, 7:30 p.m., School Committee Room, Arlington High School

CLUB NEWS

Knights to dedicate new monument

The Arlington Knights of Columbus will dedicate its newly-erected monument to God's unborn children this Sunday, Nov. 22 at 2 p.m. The public is welcome to attend this dedication and enjoy refreshments inside the Knights' hall following the dedication.

The monument stands on the grounds of the Arlington Knights of Columbus at 15 Winslow St., off Mystic Street in Arlington Center, across from the municipal parking lot. Father Ken McAskill, the council's chaplain, will lead all those present in prayer during the dedication.

Retired Men's Club schedule of events

The Retired Men's Club of Arlington announces the following events:

Singing Grandpops: Wednesday, Nov. 25, 10 a.m., Retired Men's Club, St. Camillus; Monday, Dec. 1, 2 p.m., Telephone Pioneers, Irish American Club, Malden; Monday, Dec. 7, 1 p.m., Melrose Highland Congregational Church, 355 Franklin St.; Dec. 14, 2 p.m., Corcoran House, 80 Grove St., Melrose.

Foxwoods Casino: Thursday, Dec. 17. Departs 7:30 a.m., returns 9 p.m. Pick-up points: St. Camillus Parking Lot. Price \$20 pp. Coffee/donuts available for \$1. For information/reservations contact Jim Alosso, (781) 648-6624. Make checks payable to "RMCA"

For information and/or reservations, contact the following:

Day Trips - Guy Catanzano, (781) 395-1734

Overnight Trips - Phil Akins, (781) 646-7545

Special events and Casinos - Jim Alosso, (781) 648-6624

Women's Club members attend state conference

Seven members of the Arlington Woman's Club attended the Combined District Conference of the Eastern, Northeastern, North Shore and Metro West Districts of the General Federation of Women's Clubs of Massachusetts held on Monday, Oct. 26 at the Concord Elks Club in West Concord.

The morning workshop featured presentations by leadership chairman Carol Dugan of Randolph, membership chairman Barrie Coleman of Auburn, and public relations chairman Jeanne Gould of Whitinsville.

A special project of GFWC, Libraries 2000, was the feature of the presentation by Dorothy Graham of Framingham, who explained the commitment of the clubs to contribute \$12,500,000 worth of books and materials to public libraries and public school libraries by the year 2000.

The Special President's Project, chosen by president Shirley Gomes, GFWC of Massachusetts, was presented by Martha Michalewich of Northborough. The Children's Trust Fund is a public/private partnership charged with implementing Massachusetts' child abuse prevention plan. Its objectives are to support and strengthen families before they are in crisis and to build strong children and nurturing families with strong foundations.

Members of the Arlington Woman's Club who attended the conference include Arlington Club president Dorothy Williams, vice president Avis McDonnell, Betty Bullock, Terry Matson, Doris Bancroft, Rona Turano and Anne Frederick.

Selectmen vote to raise next year's tax rate

BY SUSAN DANSEYAR
STAFF WRITER

Taxes will most likely go up this year once the Department of Revenue approves the new mill rate of 17.17.

It's a slight increase over Arlington's rate of 16.73 last year, said Peter McLaughlin, data collector for the town. If approved, taxes will be \$17.17 per thousand of assessed value, which means the tax bill for a home assessed at \$200,000 will be \$3,434 compared with \$3,346 last year; a home assessed at \$250,000 will have a tax bill of \$4,292 compared with \$4,182 last year.

The town expects to have the new rate certified by early December. If certification is

granted by the Department of Revenue, residents will see changes in their January tax bill.

"This isn't a terribly large increase," McLaughlin said. "Taxes very seldom go down."

On Monday, selectmen voted to keep Arlington's flat tax rate. Residents bear 91 percent of the tax revenue because the town has historically maintained the same rate for residential and commercial property. Selectmen decided to continue the tradition, saying the number of Arlington businesses are a small proportion of the tax base and shifting to a dual rate would place an unfair burden on commerce and industry.

Taxes usually go up each year, allowed

under Proposition 2 1/2, said McLaughlin. This year, he explained, some 40 cents of \$17.17 will go toward the debt exclusion voted in last year's special election and \$1.30 will go toward the town's water and sewer tax. Arlington includes the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority debt as part of the property tax bill.

As always, McLaughlin said, tax abatements are available for widows, the blind, disabled veterans, those who have suffered hardships and those over 70 years old. Abatements are not automatic, but must meet specific requirements, McLaughlin warned. Application forms are available in the Assessors office in Town Hall. Call 315-3034 for additional information.

AND THE WINNERS ARE....



Above left, William Cronin, a real estate broker with Sweeney & O'Connell Real Estate, accepts the Business Person of the Year award during the annual Chamber of Commerce awards banquet Friday night. Above right, Margaret Phaneuf of Sports Etc. displays the plaque she received as Citizen of the Year. Other award winners included new business award: Trader Joe's, Arlington Heights; business revitalization award: Arlington Restaurant & Diner, East Arlington; business display creativity award: Just Blossoming, Arlington Center; director's award: Richard Moskow, CPA; president's award: Director of Public Works Richard Bento; and the Leonard Talkov award: Cambridge Savings Bank.



PHOTOS BY WENDY MIMRAN

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers needed in Arlington schools

The Arlington public schools need volunteers for the following tasks:

- Homework helpers at Thompson School, Tues., Wed, Thurs., 2:15-3:30.
- Copying and laminating help at Ottoson.
- Classroom helpers at Dallin, Kindergarten and Grade 2.
- Anyone interested in music can help the music teacher, Tues., Thurs., or Fri. at Dallin

- Needlepoint Helper at Dallin, Grade 5 during October.
- Native Hindi speaker to help 2nd grader at Dallin
- Person who likes science to work on Science-by-mail after school at Ottoson.
- Lunchtime and Library help at all elementary schools.
- Also looking for an electric typewriter in good working order. If you are interested in volunteering for any of the listings above, call Judi Bohn, 316-3573.
- Ottoson Media Center seeks volunteers to help with shelving and bar coding books, typing or

word processing call Jane Rud-dock or Ellyn MacNamara 641-5440.

• Arlington High School Media Center is looking for someone who can work on tape recorders and VCR's as a troubleshooter. Call Shelley Glantz at 316-3578.

Girl Scouts seeking school organizers

The Arlington Girl Scouts are looking for school organizers for both the Bishop and St. Agnes schools. The duties would include attending a meeting on the sec-

ond Tuesday of each month and distributing information from these meetings to the leaders. If you are interested, please call Debbie Minns at (781) 643-9084.

Older Girl Scouts in grades 6th through 12th grade are invited to a pizza party on Sunday, Nov. 22 from 4-4 p.m. at the Park Ave. Congregational Church. The Scouts are looking for ideas to create a program for older girls that works. A survey was sent out this week to all known registered older Girl Scouts. If you did not receive the survey, please call Sue Fitzgerald at (781) 646-5928.

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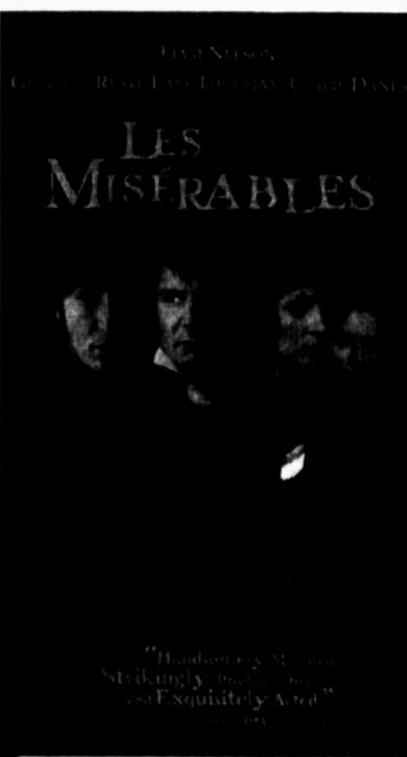
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License given for car dealership on hotel site

BY SUSAN DANSEYAR
STAFF WRITER

Selectmen unanimously voted to grant Andrew Bellizia and John Knopf, co-owners of Cambridge Motor Car Company, an application to open a car dealership at 19 Massachusetts Avenue pending all other appropriate permits are granted.

The town worked hard to encourage a hotel to go into the spot, said Selectman Charles Lyons, but the process has taken more than a year and may go on for another year or so. At this point, he said, selectmen should grant permission (to Cambridge Motor Car) and allow the building inspector to looking into zoning inquiries.

The issue was tabled at the Oct. 19 meeting when a question was posed as to whether or not the site was legal, from a zoning viewpoint, for automotive use. According to Town Counsel John F. Maher, 1997 Town Meeting approved rezoning of the property to permit the construction of a hotel. The license granted to Robert Bernson, of Alewife Motors, expired on April 30, 1996.

A section of the Zoning Enabling Act provides that a zoning bylaw may define and regulate nonconforming uses and structures abandoned or not used for a period of two years. The question arises, Maher said, as to whether the previous automotive use has been abandoned. An argument can be made either way to this site, he said.

Consistent with prior practice, Maher suggested selectmen consider Cambridge Motor Car's application for an automotive dealer's license independent of the zoning question.

Appointments

At their Monday meeting, the Board of Selectmen approved the following appointments:

• **Larry Goldberg** was appointed to the Commission on Disabilities. Goldberg, who recently moved to Arlington from Cambridge, has significant experience in the field of disabilities. Currently he serves as director CPB/WGBH National

Center for Accessible Media, a division of public broadcaster WGBH. In this role and related positions at WGBH over the past 13 years, Goldberg has been an advocate for the rights and needs of people with disabilities. He oversees a staff of 125 people involved in closed captioning for deaf and hard-of-hear-

SELECTMEN NOTES

ing television viewers, video description for blind and visually impaired people and research and development into new technologies for access to media and information on people with disabilities.

• **Susan C. Ruderman** was appointed to the Board of Library Trustees. Ruderman, who has been a homeowner with her husband in Arlington for nine years and intends to remain in the community, has an infant daughter and said she is therefore committed to what the Arlington public libraries can offer to all ages. Currently the vice president of Veritas Information Services, a research consulting practice, Ruderman has an extensive background in the information profession including work at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University libraries.

• **Ronald A. Nigro**, of Massachusetts Avenue, was appointed an election worker in Precinct 13.

• **Joan Robinson, Robert Botterio** and **A. Michael Ruderman** were reappointed to the Historical Commission.

• **Donald Reenstierna** was reappointed to the Trust Fund Commission.

Health insurance rates

Selectmen postponed their decision on increasing health self-insured rates for town employees until their Nov. 30 meeting. To prepare, selectmen will thoroughly examine gross monthly costs.

According to Town Manager Donald R. Marquis, Arlington is currently not funding at a level that covers health insurance costs. Consultant Kevin Walsh, of Group Benefits Strategies, said costs are running 7 percent higher than funding levels. He recommends a 10 percent increase to cover anti-

pated costs for next year and make up a portion of this year's deficit.

The town's trust fund balance in June 1998 was \$828,000 compared to \$1.8 million in June 1997. A 10 percent increase is high, Marquis said, but is necessary to maintain the trust fund balance at a proper level to cover four months of

billing/claims lag (costs which are incurred but not yet reported).

Several residents and union representatives, however, questioned the proposed increase on Monday, saying the numbers do not add up and more investigation of billing procedures is necessary.

Renaming Railroad Avenue

Railroad Avenue will be renamed to David Lamson Way in honor of a free black Arlington man who helped push back British troops during the Revolutionary War.

Frederick Sennott Jr., of the Menotomy Minute Men, appeared before selectmen to tell David Lamson's story. When a British relief troop passed through Arlington some 214 years ago — in front of where the First Parish Church stands — 11 ordinary citizens decided to ambush the soldiers. Lamson took control of that ambush. "Capture of the troop was one of the most significant events of the day, ranking with Paul Revere's ride," Sennott said.

Members of the Public Memorials Committee unanimously agreed to the Menotomy Minute Mens' request.

Taxi rates may rise

For the first time in 11 years, Arlington taxi-cab owners and drivers are requesting permission to raise their rates.

Owners of Arlington Taxi and Arlex Taxi Corp. appeared before selectmen to explain state taxi insurance has increased nearly \$3,000 per vehicle per year and maintenance and personnel cost have increased at or above the rate of inflation. In addition, they said, they must compete with individuals and companies that operate outside the licensing and insur-

ance regulations taxis must follow. Therefore, drivers and owners are requesting their drop rate (the rate when the meter is turned on) increase to \$1.25; the rate per mile increase to 30 cents; and the waiting time per hour increase to \$22. With the increase, a one-mile trip would go from \$3 to \$3.60 and each mile thereafter would go from \$2 to \$2.40.

Selectmen postponed making a decision until Dec. 2. In the meantime, they will examine rates from surrounding towns.

Carberry's is coming

Selectmen approved Matthew Carberry's request to open a bakery and coffee house in the old D'Angelo's spot on Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington Center, pending the approval of other town departments.

Carberry's, which operates bakeries in Central Square in Cambridge and Davis Square in Somerville, formed a corporation in 1993 for the purpose of opening a series of bakeries and coffee houses that "reflect the shifting lifestyle, health and eating habits of Americans," Matthew Carberry said. "Our vision is to create warm, architecturally interesting and inviting places where people find a connection to each other by virtue of their appreciation for good food and coffee, for treating each other with respect and for expression of individualism."

The Carberry bakeries feature crusty European hearth baked bread, cappuccino and espresso bars and a wide selection of scones, muffins, pastries, soups, salads and sandwiches.

Heights re-opening celebration tonight

Children wanting to get an early jump on their Christmas lists might want to stop by Arlington Heights tonight, where Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus are expected to make a visit to the town's celebration marking the re-opening of the business district.

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Selectmen and the Public Works Department will join the Heights merchants in celebrating the near completion of the project and the re-opening of the Heights. The festivities will be from 5-8 p.m. There will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony, followed by a lighting ceremony. The light poles will be decorated

by the town with banners and wreaths and the trees will be lighted with installation done by RCN.

Festivities for the evening, including a petting zoo and cotton candy in the parking lot at D'Agostino's, will be free. Free hot dogs, compliments of D'Agostino's and Boar's Head will be distributed from inside the store (while supplies last). There will be pony rides for the children in the Taylor Rental parking lot and many specials and treats from the Heights merchants.

MediaOne will be on hand to tape the event, airing it at a later date on ACTV Channel 3.

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Absolut \$22 ⁹⁹ 1.75 L	Gilbey's \$12 ⁹⁹ Gin 1.75 L	Gordon's \$12 ⁹⁹ Vodka 1.75 L
Dunnewood 750ml Merlot\$7.99 Chardonnay & Cabernet\$6.99	Cider Jack 6pk\$5.99 Case\$19.99	Firestone \$6 ⁹⁹ Riesling (great with Turkey) 750ml
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Old New England \$7 ⁹⁹ Egg Nog 1 Liter	Bacardi \$9 ⁹⁹ Limon 750 ml	Kalibur \$4 ⁹⁹ Non-Alcoholic 6 pk
Ecco Domani \$7 ⁹⁹ Pinot Grigio 750ml	Corona \$9 ⁹⁹ 12pk Bottles	Andre 3/\$10⁹⁹ Champagne 750ml

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THE LOTTERY

POLICE LOG

Nov. 11

At 3:10 a.m., police arrested William Ware, 44, of Wilton, N.H., and arrested him with operating under the influence of alcohol.

After receiving a police radio broadcast indicating that a gray car was traveling to Cambridge from Boston after fleeing the scene of an accident, Arlington police stopped a gray car traveling west on Massachusetts Avenue near Mill Street. The front of the car had extensive damage and the car appeared to be traveling above the speed limit.

Police asked the driver to perform several field sobriety tests which he agreed to do. After failing all the tests, Ware was placed under arrest and transported to the station.

Nov. 13

At 10:10 p.m., police arrested Kim Legare, 44, of 138 Flash Road, Nahant, and charged him with failing to stop for police while operating a motor vehicle, operating under the influence of alcohol - more than one prior, leaving scene after property damage, operating negligently to endanger.

Police responded to a citizen report of an erratic driver traveling westbound on Massachusetts Avenue. Police saw the car stopped in front of Stop & Shop, at which point they activated their car lights and sirens in attempt to pull the vehicle over. The driver continued to travel another one-quarter mile before pulling over.

FIRE LOG

The Fire Department responded to 80 calls during the period of Nov. 10-16. The calls included 30 rescues, 11 investigations, and 10 fire.

Nov. 11

At 7:46 a.m., firefighters responded to Broadway for a car accident. A 44-year-old man's car had been rear-ended, with damage done to his car. He complained of head pain.

Nov. 15

At 10:19 a.m., firefighters responded to the Route 2 access road for a two-car accident. One car had rolled over and hit the other, causing extensive damage to both cars. There were no injuries.

Minuteman committee begins work on assessments

BY JANET JEHL
SPECIAL TO THE ADVOCATE

Budget concerns were again a contentious issue at Tuesday night's meeting of the Minuteman Regional High School Committee. Superintendent Ron Fitzgerald reported that his administrators had developed budget requests that were very close to current level funding, as they were asked to do.

But after receiving a copy of the preliminary school budget, Jane Pagett of Lexington said she felt the document lacked "the clarity and honesty" she needed to go confidently back to her town's Finance Committee. It also was not broken down for each member town, but rather gave information that a committee member could use to figure their town's respective share.

Jeff Stulin of Needham said, "I have never seen the administration act less than honestly, but there could be more clarity."

Paul Schlichtman of Arlington was upset that he couldn't get the current enrollment figures which the school files with the state on Oct. 1. He said the report lists student enrollments by town, and also lists tuition and choice enrollments. The figures are the basis for calculating the foundation budget and spending requirements, and also give an accurate

number on how many children are attending Minuteman from each school.

"I want the October 1 report because this is the only way to accurately determine the enrollment at the school," Schlichtman said after the meeting. "Ron (Fitzgerald) can try to dance around our enrollment problems with last night's handouts, but the state would find them to be totally unacceptable. I want data that meets the state reporting standards."

Stulin suggested that each concerned member brainstorm a method for presenting the budget in a more clarified form. He asked members to make notes on the current form and design an alternative to put before members for discussion at a later meeting.

Schlichtman asked Chairman Bob Wiltse to hand out a document for consideration, which proposed that Minuteman not alter the current amendment the the Education Reform Act of 1993, but rather work within its guidelines. The amendment could reduce the amount each member town contributes to the school's budget. Wiltse asked Schlichtman to contact him about putting a discussion of the document's contents on the next agenda.

Audit 'clean'

Karen Farrell from KPMG Peat Marwick gave an overview of Minuteman's most recent audit. Her summary included highlights and comparisons of the 1997 and 1998 numbers. The audit was in

Farrell's word "clean," and her only suggestions were to look at, analyze and consider movement of old student activity accounts which are unused but still on the books. She also recommended that the school make sure that there are always at least two people aware of and signing off on student activity disbursements and at least two people collecting and depositing money relative to student accounts.

Finally she urged the school to continue examining potential problems related to the year 2000 transition in order to avert financial glitches. These were minor suggestions and not indicators of existing problems, she said.

Department presentations

Nancy Amara, coordinator for Commercial Services A, which includes cosmetology, child care, dental and health occupations reported on her upcoming needs for school year 1999-2000. The only area which exceeded current funding is Health Occupations where Amara anticipates the need for a nurse to work with students as a supervisor at off campus clinical sites.

Stulin said he was impressed by the entrepreneurial focus of the cosmetology program. One former student, a current freshman at Regis College is booked solid Saturdays and Sundays doing acrylic nails for other students at the school. "She expects she may pay for her tuition doing nails," Amara said.

Stulin asked Amara if she

thought the students were, "indoctrinated into entrepreneurial thinking by the program or did they come to Minuteman with that frame of mind?"

Amara said the positions in cosmetology look much more exciting to many students when they begin to consider owning and running their own businesses.

John Jefferson then presented Commercial Services B, which include culinary arts, graphic communications (printing and commercial art), retail management, and banking. Jefferson showed a video taken from television news highlighting Minuteman's gourmet restaurant, The Fire and Drum.

Jefferson's projected 1999-2000 budget requires about \$3,000 over this year's budget due primarily to an increase in culinary and retail students and the need for preventive maintenance in Food Service.

Jefferson said he and other faculty members in his division are continually reminding students of the opportunities beyond the high school arena. "I try not to only talk up college, but also to emphasize other training opportunities that can take students that extra step beyond high school," he said.

The last presentation came from Leo DeSimone, the Trades Division Coordinator and conducted a tour of the carpentry, electrical, HVAC, auto mechanics and auto body shop.

The next meeting is set for Tuesday, Dec. 15.

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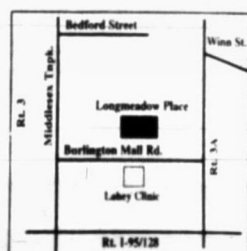
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Arlington residents Suzanne Stumpf and Daniel Ryan, co-founders of Musicians of the Old Post Road.

Local ensemble begins 10th season of concerts

BY SARAH BOLLINGER
SPECIAL TO THE ADVOCATE

Arlington's prize-winning early music chamber ensemble, Musicians of the Old Post Road, will open its 10th season this weekend with performances of "Music of the Seasons" at historic buildings in Cambridge, Shrewsbury and Wayland.

Performing on authentic period instruments — strings, flutes, recorders and keyboards — the group will offer music of Vivaldi, Boismortier, Lemaire and Werner.

Specializing in historical performance, Musicians of the Old Post Road have played their music throughout the United States and in Europe. The concerts this weekend will be given at Christ Church in Cambridge on Friday, Nov. 21, at 8 p.m., Saturday evening at 8 p.m. at the First Congregational Church in Shrewsbury and Sunday afternoon at 3 p.m. at the First Parish Church in Wayland.

Under the direction of artistic directors Suzanne Stumpf and Daniel Ryan, both of Arlington, the program will feature Stumpf, traverso; Ryan cello and bass violin; and Michael Bahmann, harpsichord, as well as a viola da gamba and violone. Soloists will be Julia McKenzie, violin, and Pamela Murray, soprano. Other core ensemble members include violinist Julia McKenzie and violinist Marcia Cassidy. Ryan currently serves as music director at Arlington's St. James Church.

According to Stumpf, when at home the group performs at beautiful historic buildings — meetinghouses, churches, mansions, museums and halls — along the 300-year-old Boston Post Road, which was the original thoroughfare connecting Boston with New York city.

"Over the past decade, the series has united music of the baroque, classical and early romantic periods with the architecture, acoustics and ambiance of those eras," Stumpf said.

At a meeting at the Park Plaza Hotel in Boston on Oct. 31, the American Musicological Society presented Musicians of the Old Post Road with the society's 1998 Noah Greenberg Award. The award honored the group for its recently released recording of "Trios and Scottish Song Settings of J.N. Hummel." An earlier

Selectmen throw support behind three TM articles

BY SUSAN DANSEYAR
STAFF WRITER

The Board of Selectmen is recommending three warrant articles for special Town Meeting on Dec. 2 which, if passed, will establish an Election Review Committee, appoint additional members to the Millennium Celebration Committee and regulate the hours when heavy equipment and construction machinery can operate in Arlington.

Examining town elections

An Election Review Committee, proposed under Article 8, will examine current practices and policies to determine if they maintain efficiency in town elections. The committee, if established, will look into the number and location of all voting places in Arlington, the coordination and supervision of elections and review the costs of elections as well as current compensation of election workers.

Each year, said Selectman John Hurd, election issues arise and are dealt with on a "piecemeal" basis. Establishing a committee, he said, would allow the town to look into issues pertaining to elections all at once.

Millennium celebration

The 1997 Town Meeting established a Millennium Committee to make plans for a celebration commemorating millennium events during the weeks leading up to Jan. 1, 2000. Twelve members of the committee are to be the Town Treasurer, Town Clerk, Town Moderator, a member of the Board of Selectmen, a member of the School Committee, an assessor, three Town Meeting members chosen by lottery and three resi-

dents appointed by selectmen.

Article 11 proposes additional members can be appointed by the committee itself.

Controlling construction noise

Article 7, on behalf of residents around Mystic Street, asks the town to amend the bylaws so a new provision can limit the hours heavy equipment and construction machinery can operate.

Recently, said selectman Charles Lyons, residents have complained of construction taking place late in the evening. The general issue of noise pollution can be addressed at regular Town Meeting but this provision, he said, will specifically address certain types of equipment and machinery.

Selectmen support building regulations

Selectmen voted not to take action on Article 6 which would repeal the requirement that a town Board of Examiners grant a license, dependent on passing an

exam, for builders wanting to undertake certain classes of construction projects in Arlington.

The article was submitted by 200 registered voters who feel the bylaw, effective in Arlington since 1972, is redundant. Since 1982, a uniform Massachusetts Construction Supervisors License requirement has been in effect. Article 6 supporters say a majority of the communities in the state have adopted the requirement as the licensing benchmark for construction professionals. Robert Petrucelli, executive director of the Associated General Contractors of Massachusetts, recently wrote the Board of Selectmen, said since 1972 a number of safeguards, including the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), have been enacted. "OSHA's Standards for the Construction Industry are quite encompassing with the federal agency's Boston regional office being extremely vigilant with enforcement of these standards," Petrucelli wrote.

William Rowe of Kensington Road said the town licensing of builders is a difficult process which does not encourage builders to work in the community and reduces citizens' ability to have their choice of contractors. Rowe also maintains the Licensing Board has not operated properly in many years, claiming the closed procedure is suspect, the quality of exams is unregulated and the pool of responsible professionals available or interested in the board has all but disappeared.

Selectmen, however, said they like the idea of Arlington having an additional safeguard for the public. Building Inspector Michael Byrne also supports maintaining the bylaw.

"The licensing is a great support for us," Byrne said on Monday. "The state building code does not cover construction of certain structures and I'd like to see construction control which takes all building projects into consideration remain."

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HEALTH NEWS

Smoking cessation kits available free

Middlesex County smokers take heart: The American Lung Association of Middlesex County has 100 nicotine patch kits available to help residents stop smoking.

Each kit consists of a starter kit and two refills — enough nicotine patches for a six-week smoking cessation program — and a bottle with a child-proof cap to dispose of the used patches.

Participants also will receive free, the highly-regarded Freedom From Smoking cessation booklet. The kits, donated by McNeil Laboratories, makers of Nicotrol, are available free.

The American Lung Association is distributing 35,000 such kits nationwide as part of the "On Your Mark, Get Set, Quit" an educational program designed to help smokers kick the cigarette habit. The patches are applied to the skin and deliver a dose of nicotine, one of the most addictive substances in cigarettes.

Both nationwide and local follow-ups will be conducted to see how well people have done in the battle to quit cigarettes.

Anyone who is interested in taking advantage of the free nicotine patch kits should call (781) 272-2866 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. The patch kit will be mailed to smokers who apply by sending a \$5 check or money order to the American Lung Association to cover postage.

The Food and Drug Administration has set eligibility requirements for people to get the free nicotine patch kits. Eligible people must:

- Be over 18 years of age and provide a copy of their license;
- Smoke more than 10 cigarettes a day;
- Not be pregnant or nursing;
- Not have had a heart attack, irregular heartbeat or other disease in the last six months;
- Not have high blood pressure greater than 160/100 not controlled with medication;
- Not be taking medication for asthma or depression;

Not be allergic to adhesive

tape or have skin problems such as eczema or psoriasis.

Cmielewski joins Harvard Vanguard

Patricia A. Cmielewski of Arlington recently joined the marketing department of Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates as marketing manager.

As marketing manager of Harvard Vanguard, Cmielewski is responsible for helping to develop the brand positioning and site-specific marketing programs for this 14-site medical group practice.

Cmielewski joined Harvard Vanguard from Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, where she served in a variety of positions since 1994, most recently as associate marketing manager. Previously she was with Clark Boardman Callaghan in New York.

A graduate of Pennsylvania State University with a bachelors in advertising, Cmielewski is a MBA candidate at Boston University.

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Patricia A. Cmielewski

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7:15, 9:40
• RUSH HOUR (PG-13)
1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30
Friday, Nov. 20
• BELOVED (R)
5:10, 8:20
• SLUMS OF BEVERLY HILLS (R)
7:15, 9:25
• TOUCH OF EVIL (PG-13)
2, 4:45, 7, 9:45
• PRACTICAL MAGIC (PG-13)
2:30, 5, 7:10, 9:15
• EVER AFTER (PG-13)
2:35, 4:50
• SIMON BIRCH (PG)
2:25
• WHAT DREAMS MAY COME (PG-13)
2:05, 4:40, 7:05, 9:20
• THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY (R)
2:15, 4:35, 7:20, 9:35
Sat. Nov. 21 & Sun., Nov. 22
• BELOVED (R)
5:10, 8:20
• SLUMS OF BEVERLY HILLS (R)
7:15, 9:25
• TOUCH OF EVIL (PG-13)
11:45, 2, 4:45, 7, 9:45

• PRACTICAL MAGIC (PG-13)
12:10, 2:30, 5, 7:10, 9:15
• EVER AFTER (PG-13)
12:15, 2:35, 4:50
• SIMON BIRCH (PG)
12, 2:25
• WHAT DREAMS MAY COME (PG-13)
11:40, 2:05, 4:40, 7:05, 9:20
• THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY (R)
11:50, 2:15, 4:35, 7:20, 9:35
Monday, Nov. 23 & Tues., Nov. 24
• BELOVED (R)
5:10, 8:20
• SLUMS OF BEVERLY HILLS (R)
7:15, 9:25
• TOUCH OF EVIL (PG-13)
2, 4:45, 7, 9:45
• PRACTICAL MAGIC (PG-13)
2:30, 5, 7:10, 9:15
• EVER AFTER (PG-13)
2:35, 4:50
• SIMON BIRCH (PG)
2:25
• WHAT DREAMS MAY COME (PG-13)
2:05, 4:40, 7:05, 9:20
• THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY (R)
2:15, 4:35, 7:20, 9:35

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Marquis named publisher of CNC Northwest group

Thomas W. Marquis has joined Community Newspaper Company as executive publisher of the Northwest group, which includes *The Arlington Advocate*.

Marquis comes to CNC from Suburban Journals in St. Louis, where he worked as director of advertising and promotion for that group of 40 weekly newspapers. His appointment was announced by Kirk Davis, president of Community Newspaper Company.

"I'm happy to be back in New England and even more excited about the opportunity to serve as the publisher of your community newspaper," Marquis said this week.

Before joining Suburban Journals, Marquis worked as retail advertising director for the Orange County Register in Santa Ana, Calif., a Freedom Communications newspaper with 350,000 daily and 420,000 Sunday circulation.

He got his start in the advertising arena on the East Coast, as advertising director of The Hartford Courant from 1989 to 1992. His career began in circulation, with operational responsibility at several small dailies in Connecticut and New Jersey. In 1985 he joined the Hartford Courant as director of circulation, with responsibility for all consumer marketing, customer service, operations, distribution and subscriber information systems. He holds a bachelor of arts degree in political science/government from West Virginia Wesleyan College.

Speaking about his new role



Thomas W. Marquis

in the newspaper company, Marquis said, "There is a record of achievement for Community Newspaper Company over the years that is the result of our service to readers, advertisers and the communities we serve."

"I look forward to working with the staff of your newspaper to ensure that we provide value and quality in everything we do," he said. "I also pledge that we will be the pre-eminent source for local news, information and advertising for you and your neighbors."

Marquis and his wife Michele, who has joined CNC as vice president of the company's telecenter in Needham, have a 2-year-old son, Dylan.

Tom Marquis replaces Mark O'Neil, who has taken the position of executive publisher for CNC's North group of newspapers, based in Danvers.

Marquis is based in CNC's office on Baker Avenue Extension in Concord.

Danseyar joins 'Advocate' staff

Susan Danseyar has joined the *Arlington Advocate* as a staff reporter, replacing Brian Boyd who left Arlington to work for the *Watertown TAB & Press*.

Danseyar comes to Arlington from Littleton where she worked as editor of the Littleton Independent, a sister publication of *The Advocate*. A resident of Cambridge for the last three years, she has also worked as a freelance writer for several publications in the Boston area.

"I enjoyed being the editor of a community newspaper but missed the opportunity to attend more meetings and write articles, the main responsibilities of a staff reporter," she said. "I've driven through Arlington quite a bit, on my way home, but now I will really have the chance to learn about the town I'm a neighbor of."

Danseyar grew up in Connecticut. She received her undergraduate in liberal arts from Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. where she studied



Susan Danseyar

dance and English. She has a master of arts degree in English from Boston University.

She can be reached at her Lexington office, 9 Meriam St., Lexington 02420; by telephone at (781) 674-7733; or by e-mail at susan.danseyar@cnc.com.

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"At this time of Thanksgiving, we would like to give thanks for the caregivers in and around the Arlington community; the doctors, nurses, hospice workers and home care providers who care for all of us in our time of need."

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COMMENT



The
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EDITORIAL

Patients are winners in hospital survey

Chalk one up in the plus column for consumers this week. A first-of-its-kind survey of hospital patients in Massachusetts yielded some pleasant surprises, areas of concern and a wealth of information to anyone faced with picking a hospital.

The survey of 12,680 patients at 58 hospitals showed that patients often are happier with their care and treatment at community hospitals than at some of Boston's most prestigious medical centers. The survey doesn't compare the actual medical care that is provided, but it does look at the sundry things that add to a patient's comfort level and knowledge during and after a hospital stay.

The study by a Harvard University-based health care coalition is meant to give people faced with a hospital stay or surgery some information upon which they might make their decision about which hospital to choose.

The survey also gives hospital staffers a report card, of sorts, on how they are doing providing information and education to patients; involving family and friends in the process; providing physical comfort for patients; coordinating care among different departments in the hospital; and paying attention to patient preferences.

There are many things that go into choosing a hospital — not the least of which is simple geography. For some minor surgery, it makes the most sense to take advantage of a hospital close to home. Whether a patient can actually "choose" a hospital also might depend on the person's health insurer and his or her doctor's hospital affiliation. Even taking those limitations into account, this hospital survey can help educate us about the hospitals where we might end up as patients.

The responses from Symmes Hospital & Medical Center to the survey results have been promising. Hospital administrators are taking this information seriously, using the survey as a "reality check" for how their hospitals are — or are not — responding to patients' needs, concerns and preferences.

This survey helps make us all better-educated consumers, and should prompt improvements in the health care system in Massachusetts.

Submitting news

It's easy to submit news to *The Arlington Advocate*. We want to help publicize your activities, but you've got to help us, too.

Three quick points to remember:

- Give us your information in writing.
- Give us ample time to process your news.
- Include a name and a phone so that we can contact you for more information if necessary.

A news release tells Who is doing What, When, Where, and Why. Often the How may be necessary, too. Always include the time, date, and place of the event, including the address of the meeting place. Double-spaced typewritten copy if preferred. If information must be handwritten, write legibly on one side of the paper only. We cannot publish information that is not clear.

Letters to the editor should be concise and contain the signature and address of the author. Telephone numbers will not be published. Anonymous letters will not be accepted. Letters are subject to editing.

Sports information should be directed to our sports editor, Walter Moynihan, at 674-7724.

The deadline for all press releases and opinion pieces is 3 p.m. on Friday for the following week's issue. The only exceptions are reports of weekend events, which are accepted until 3 p.m. Monday. The deadline for letters to the editor is noon Monday. During weeks with holidays, deadlines are often made earlier.

Publication is at the discretion of the editor. *The Arlington Advocate* cannot guarantee the return of materials submitted for publication, including photographs.

Photographs should be clearly marked on the back with information about the event and the names of all people in the photograph.

Obituaries are accepted from funeral homes only. In a recent change of policy, we will now run photographs of the deceased if provided to us. However, the photographs should be relatively recent.

News items should be sent to: Editor, *The Arlington Advocate*, 9 Meriam St., Lexington, Mass., 02173. Items may also be sent to our Internet address: arlington@cnc.com; or faxed to 674-7735.



Don't believe spins put on MCAS results

You can be sure of one thing — the scores for the new statewide tests given to all 4th, 8th and 10th graders last spring are not good.

How bad they are is a closely guarded secret at the moment, but the state Department of Education is engaged in a massive public relations campaign to convince teachers, parents, students — and reporters — not to focus on the actual test scores, and not to try to compare schools.

State education officials went so far as to hold two special meetings with the press — and a third meeting with parents — in a coordinated attempt at preemptive spin control.

When the scores are finally made public sometime later this month or in early December, reporters should not rush to judgment, cautioned Department of Education Alan Safran.

"There is so much behind the numbers," he said, urging reporters to look for the human interest stories behind the numbers.

Board of Education member Abigail Thernstrom was even more blunt, predicting that reporters will botch the story.

"We can't hope they get it right," she said. "They're very lazy."

AT THE STATEHOUSE

Steve
LEBLANC



At this point an alarm should be going off in the head of every parent in the state. When a public official tells you not to pay attention to the facts, in this case the test scores, then something is up.

Two slightly different scenarios could be playing out.

First, the scores really could be worse than anyone expected. In that case, the Education Department's diversion tactics makes sense.

Except that the press is going to report the numbers anyway. They have to. Not only would it be irresponsible not to emphasize the scores, it wouldn't make sense. The whole point of the test is to gauge how well students are learning. That's what tests are all about. If there are no scores, there is no way of measuring that progress.

Of course the scores are only part of the story. Reporters must also look at the test itself, any problems that might have occurred when it was being administered and the varying

degrees of preparation made available to students. And since this is the first time the test is being given, there is nothing to measure it against.

But the scores are still the key piece of information, and parents and students have a right to know those numbers.

A second scenario could be in the works. The test scores may be bad — but not horrible. In that case, education officials might be playing an expectations game, preparing people for the worst, and then unveiling results that are not so terrible — a small public relations victory, but a victory nonetheless.

In the end, all the hemming and hawing won't make a difference. It won't change the story, and it won't change the test scores.

The problem all along is that the state has been using the test for two very different functions: an educational tool and a political soapbox.

Back at the beginning of the year, when parents and students first started worrying about the tests, Gov. Paul Cellucci adopted a tough-guy attitude toward education.

The tests were hard, he said. Many schools districts will not do well. Some schools and parents

may push to lower new education standards and ease up on the tests, but he will stand firm. I will not soften standards just to raise scores, Cellucci said.

The rhetoric played well in the early part of Cellucci's gubernatorial campaign, casting him as a leader serious about reforming the state's schools.

But education officials sold the test differently. They pointed out, correctly, that they were heading into unknown waters. The test, specifically designed to see if students have been absorbing new curricula, had never been administered before. The point of this first round of exams, officials said, was to "test the test."

The test may have to be altered to better fit the curriculum. It may not be a fair measure of student's abilities.

But, in the end, a test is a test and every test has scores. The scores from this round of tests may not be the whole story — they may not even be the best yardstick possible — but they are the hook on which any future story about Education Reform will hang.

The Education Department should give up trying to prepare people for the results and just let them know the score.

LeBlanc covers the Statehouse for Community Newspaper Co.

LETTERS

Honduras will need sustained support

To the editor:

One week ago the Advocate ran an article describing the efforts of the Pleasant Street Congregational Church to aid the victims of the Honduran hurricane disaster. The response to that article has been wonderful, and the residents of Arlington are to be commended for their compassion and generosity.

In fact, the outpouring of contributions of food and clothing in the Boston area has been so great that all of the relief organizations have requested a temporary halt to further collections, until shipment of the articles already donated can be arranged. Those cynics who question the warmth of the hearts of the people of the great Northeast should take note.

All of the organizations listed in last week's paper may still be contacted if you would like to make a monetary contribution.

This week we did have an opportunity to talk with a missionary currently in Honduras. From her description of the situation, it is clear that the process of rebuilding that nation will need to continue

long after the American media have lost interest in their plight. It is our hope that the efforts that we have made to reach out to the people of Central America during this past week will be just the beginning of a long-term involvement of the churches and citizens of Arlington in the development of our neighbors to the south.

The Rev. Thomas L. Clough
Pastor, Pleasant St. Congregational Church

Pro-active zoning needed for Osco site

To the editor:

Planning should be pro-active rather than reactive. It was good to read in the *Arlington Advocate* that someone is trying to help the Arlington Redevelopment Board develop its planning function ("Citizen Group Shares Ideas for Osco Site"). Better planning will help avoid necessity for damage control in town developments. This is long overdue. In addition to better planning Arlington obviously needs a zoning overhaul with some downzoning to prevent a repetition of the Osco disaster in other parts of town and the financial endangerment of the town

which could result from lawsuits over inappropriately zoned sites.

The Arlington Redevelopment Board persuaded the 1998 Annual Town Meeting to rezone the Osco site to B2A (high intensity business) essentially establishing it as a "spot zone" since the rest of that block is zoned B1 (low intensity business) as is the site across Massachusetts Avenue on which stand two lovely Greek Revival houses which are nicely restored. The Redevelopment Board should instead have asked Town Meeting to make the Osco site B1 thereby achieving consistency. They will have another opportunity to do this at the Town Meeting on Dec. 2 subsequent to their Board meeting on Nov. 23.

Elizabeth L. Baldwin
Jason Street

Rezoning would help town in Osco case

To the editor:

Your coverage of the helpful efforts of a group of Arlington citizens towards the resolution of the Osco situation quoted interesting remarks by two Arlington Redevelopment Board members.

One of the members said that he felt awkward commenting on it and that a lawsuit over the ARB

decision to deny the Osco Special Permit is a possibility. I trust this member is studying the issue well enough to realize that if re-zoning to B1 is accomplished by the Dec. 2 Town Meeting, by voting affirmatively on Article 4, then this will provide the town significant legal protection in such a suit since it provides important consistency with the denial of the Special Permit by the ARB.

A curious remark was made by the Chairwoman of the ARB. She said that even if a 2/3 majority of Town Meeting votes for the zoning change, it will still be reviewed by the Attorney General. She well knows that all by-law and zoning articles voted at any Town Meeting must be reviewed by the Attorney General. That is the chance Town Meeting takes with all these articles. That is why it is important to draft a good article. I hope the Chairperson can put her expertise towards making sure that this article will be acceptable for the Attorney General.

Reginald E. Newell
Jason Street

Editor's Note: While Chairwoman Nora Mann was not quoted in the article as pointing out that the Attorney General reviews all rezoning decision, she did make note of the fact during the meeting.

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 10

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MISSION STATEMENT

It is the goal of *The Arlington Advocate* to provide our readers with the highest quality local coverage they desire and need, in a newspaper that is accurate, timely and filled with an intimate and lively portrait of the community in which they live, work and play.

COMMENT

School Committee should not have changed policy to suit its whims

BY MARTIN THROPE

I take exception to the characterization by my school committee colleague, Carolyn Simmons, in the Nov. 12 article in *The Advocate* about the superintendent evaluation policy.

While I often disagree with the positions taken by Mrs. Simmons, I respect the fact that those positions are consistent and predictable. However, for Mrs. Simmons to characterize my reason for raising the issue as anger directed at those who failed to complete the required written evaluations demonstrates a basic lack of understanding of what makes me tick and the level of professionalism, the sense of responsibility and the high standards I bring to membership on the committee and my service as its chair. Anyone, including myself and Mrs. Simmons, whose actions as a committee member are motivated by personally directed anger, has no business serving in that capacity. I raised the issue simply because it needed to be.

Until the school committee meeting of Nov. 9, school committee policy required each member to prepare a written evaluation of the superintendent twice a year. For whatever reason, some members of the committee chose not to follow that policy, and this was not likely to change. In the case of this or any other policy, it is an untenable situation when members of the committee pick and choose those policies that they will follow. If the general public approached our body of laws in this way, our society would be totally chaotic. As chair, I had the opportunity to raise the issue for the committee to grapple with directly, rather than by means of angry comments at evaluation time twice a year. Unlike my predecessors as chair, Ms. Barbara Goodman included, I took advantage of that opportunity, and, in response to a specific request by the committee, invited the committee's legal counsel to advise us on this matter. By its action, the committee seems to have agreed with me that the conflict between policy and practice needed to be addressed. Yet from my perspective, the way the committee did so was unfortunate.

The committee's decision was to remove the requirement for a written evaluation, a decision with which I did not concur as the sole negative vote. My reasons were as follows. First, I firmly believe that an employee earning over \$100,000 a year should be subject to the scrutiny and accountability that a written evaluation guarantees, regardless of whether the employee's performance is good, bad or indifferent. In the world of business this statement is a no-brainer, and, even though the public schools are not a business, the taxpayers deserve that the public schools be run in

a businesslike manner. Second, such evaluations benefit the employee by serving as a vehicle for delivering well thought out feedback, and they benefit the employer, in this case the school committee, by offering a regular opportunity to step back and consider what the employee is expected to do and whether it is being done. It is a mistake to design policies around a certain individual at a certain point in time simply because, while people come and go and circumstances change, good practice remains a constant. In cases where the relationship between the employer and the employee becomes strained, written evaluations provide an important record that serves to substantiate any adverse action the employer may find it necessary to take. While the committee's vote seems to endorse verbal one-on-one evaluations as a substitute at the option of individual committee members, such evaluations disappear as soon as the words have been uttered.

Therefore, the elimination of the requirement for a written evaluation, and the obligation that requirement places on each committee member, makes the collective committee evaluation of the superintendent, as specified by the policy, disappear for all practical purposes, subject to the whims of the members. This result is an abdication of the committee's responsibility. In addition, the committee is now out of compliance with a provision of our contract with the superintendent that requires us to do written evaluations.

In an all too precipitous manner that provided no chance for exploring the various alternatives suggested to the committee by its legal counsel, we have traded unpleasantness for ineffectiveness, a very bad bargain in my opinion.

Although eliminating a source of friction among the members is an admirable goal, it is far more important to address issues on a substantive basis, and this is where Ms. Goodman's admittedly bad motion and the committee's vote missed the point. There is nothing wrong with controversy provided that the parties to the controversy approach the matter at hand in a civil and respectful manner and adhere to the decision of the majority. To shy away from controversy in order to avoid disagreement is a sure prescription for accumulating a whole collection of festering problems that will never be dealt with, and, as a result, the children in our schools will not receive the best we could otherwise offer.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that this issue is not about the current superintendent or her performance. Rather, it is about how the school committee functions and its ability to step up to its inherent responsibilities, its capacity to deal with disagreements among its members and its commitment to abide by the policies that have been established over time to guide its activities.

Thrope is chairman of the Arlington School Committee

Law will not destroy Minuteman

BY PAUL SCHLICHTMAN

I confess. I am a tax and spend liberal. I believe in quality education, and I think the role of government is to provide high quality public schools. I am willing to pay for it.

Seems ironic that I find myself in the role of a fiscal watchdog on the Minuteman Regional School Committee. Seems ironic that Jane Pagett, my colleague from Lexington and fellow fiscal watchdog, shares my commitment for things like debt exclusion votes for schools and other "liberal" causes.

You would think life would be sweet for a school superintendent when the two vocal fiscal watchdogs, on a board of 16, and are both tax and spend liberals. Only trouble is that with a liberal agenda, we simply can't afford to waste money. We can't fund quality programs when every dollar isn't spent wisely. That's why we won't sit still and passively allow the district to overcharge our member towns more than \$6,000 for each student that we send to Minuteman.

A group of liberal Democratic state legislators from our towns agree, and submitted legislation (Section 126 of the FY99 state budget) that placed a cathedral ceiling on required spending levels for Minuteman communities. Being true liberals, the legislators provided Minuteman with the highest required spending levels in the state. It also provides accountability and oversight that would give finance committees and town meetings the ability to reject up to \$2.5 million in excessive assessments.

Since this legislation was signed into law, Minuteman superintendent Ron Fitzgerald has been complaining to all who will listen that this generous, liberal legislation will destroy the school. His message is that the sky is falling, the school will close, and teachers will lose their jobs even though Minuteman still has the highest per-pupil spending requirement in the state. The superintendent's complaints include tirades in official school documents; personal attacks directed at members of the legislature, municipal officials, and two members of his own school committee.

Let's remember that every other superintendent in the state runs

their schools with lower spending requirements, and none of the other superintendents in the state are complaining that they are unable to run their schools under the minimum spending requirements of education reform.

Minuteman's fiscal difficulties are self inflicted, because the district has become totally reliant on \$5,000 School Choice students to fill \$14,000 seats. Almost one third of the student population is admitted under School Choice, and member towns must subsidize the remaining \$9,000 cost of educating Choice students. It is an expensive habit, this ever-growing dependency on out-of-district School Choice students that is like a drug habit out of control. The result is the same as a nasty addiction; Minuteman is taking money out of the family (member towns) and neglecting children (taking town money that would fund full day kindergarten or other local programs) to pay for this spiraling reliance on the quick fix of discount students from outside the district. It's why member towns pay in excess of \$20,000 (including state aid apportioned to the towns) for that \$14,000 education.

The superintendent and the majority of school committee members don't want to kick this destructive habit. They voted to ask the legislature to pass a law to eliminate the ceiling on required spending if the costs to member towns are in excess of the true cost of educating a student. In other words, Minuteman would be exempt from a \$14,479 cap on its minimum per-pupil spending requirement, and member towns would be required to pay at least \$20,255 per-pupil, because Minuteman is overcharging member towns. It doesn't require a crystal ball to predict the legislature's reaction to eviscerating a cap that was unanimously passed last summer.

The legislature understands that the problem with Minuteman is not state law, it is one of Minuteman policy and management. The legislature understands that Minuteman has the resources to solve its own problems, dramatically lower member town assessments, without reducing services and without laying off even one teacher. All it takes is responsible management, determination, and

some withdrawals from a \$3.7 million fund balance that Minuteman has accumulated over the years. Yes, Minuteman is complaining that they are going to go broke when they have more than \$3.7 million stashed in the mattresses.

I'm not rich. When my paycheck arrives, I deposit most of it in my checking account and then pay my bills. I spend money earned in 1998 in 1998; I simply can't afford to put this money in the bank and wait until 1999 to use it for my living expenses. However, this is how Minuteman runs its finances. All revenue from Chapter 74 tuition and School Choice is placed in the bank, and none of it is spent until the next fiscal year. As Minuteman has more than half of its students attending under Chapter 74 and Choice, a sizable amount of money sits around until the following year. Last July, the Minuteman School Committee voted to transfer more than \$3.7 million of unencumbered funds from the 1998 to 1999 fiscal year budget, including \$180,000 in interest on this revolving nest egg.

This huge cushion of money is the key to a transition to sound fiscal practices. Minuteman's large fund balances are the key to a responsible fiscal plan that will allow member towns to have a 21 percent reduction in costs for vocational education while we kick the School Choice habit. Meanwhile, the other non-resident funding program, Chapter 74 tuition, is now set by the state at \$11,402 per-pupil and is increasing at a rate of ten percent each year. We began the 1999 fiscal year on July 1, which means we have almost four years to eliminate our dependence on \$5,000 Choice students. That shouldn't be difficult.

So, the next time you hear a shrill alarm that legislators and certain school committee members are out to destroy Minuteman, don't believe it. Remember that 350 out of 351 superintendents run districts with lower net school spending requirements. If every other district in the state can do it, Minuteman should be able to as well. And remember, you heard it from a tax and spend liberal. *Schlichtman is Arlington's representative on the Minuteman Regional High School Committee.*

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LETTERS

LETTERS, FROM PAGE 8

Criticism off base on paper's endorsement

To the editor:
This letter is in response to a letter printed in The Arlington Advocate on Nov. 11 1998.
The author of the letter was dis-

turbed about Community Newspapers endorsement of Governor Cellucci. As a Libertarian I understand not having my candidate endorsed, but that's freedom.

The author thinks that there is a problem with the parent company, Fidelity Funds appearing to pay back the Republicans for getting legislation through that was

favorable to its interests. It would be silly for them not to. Does the author vote for candidates that oppose what he believes are his best interests? I think not.

He goes on to say that he thinks it is unacceptable for one company to control as many newspapers as Fidelity Funds does, and he wants to use the precedent of one bad law to make another that would stifle free speech or those with opposing views. Then he goes on to say, Fidelity should be ashamed to make profits with these papers. Last time I looked, making profits was a very honorable goal. At what point did profit become a dirty word in these United States? Maybe the author could buy the Advocate or start a new paper to compete with it. He could even run it at a loss if profit is such a sin. I don't imagine that this venture into the world of newspaper publishing would last very long though.

But, the most astonishing statements came in the last paragraph of his letter. Let me quote, "Let the free market rule? I don't think so. We can either be a free market or a free people." On the contrary, we can not be a free people without a free market. Economic freedom is personal freedom, economic rights are human rights. If we are not allowed to control how, when and where we spend the fruits of our labor, are we any longer really a free people?

It gets better though, he goes on to say something about "the government being afraid to regulate the ownership of the media."

It seems all the talk about freedom only applies to media organs that agree with him. That is a very chilly thought on this cold Veterans Day. I wonder what Adams, Jefferson and Washington would have said about that.

James Merchant
Chandler Street

Town Meeting should rezone site

To the editor:
The Redevelopment Board denied a proposed retail development at Mass. Avenue and Mill Street for reasons including substantial increase in truck delivery and customer traffic.

The Redevelopment Board's Traffic Study showed this intersection congested with no development on the now vacant old Times-Olds car dealership lot. One traffic lane at this intersection received a rating of "F", for failure to safely handle current traffic — with the lot empty.

The Board has taken a major step in implementing the town's vision for this area set out in the 1995 Arlington Business Community study which calls for less intense car traffic uses.

The next step is to change this currently isolated BA2 zoned parcel to B1 zoning for less intense traffic and development impact. The town should not miss the opportunity the Redevelopment board has presented them to rezone this lot in accordance with the town plan vision.

What about the current lot purchaser and their proposal?

Commercial lots on Mass Ave. require Redevelopment Board review and special permitting before building can begin so that traffic safety and other development issues can be worked out

beforehand. Commercial developers purchase property contingent upon their proposal meeting these town safety and other regulations as reviewed and approved with a special permit issued by the Redevelopment Board. If the developer's proposals do not meet the special permit requirements, they get their down payment back from the seller.

If a developer buys the property without contingency they place themselves in risk. It is understood that this developer did not buy the property on a contingent basis. The developer has not indicated why they placed themselves in this risk.

John Horton
Irving Street

Parking losses will hurt Heights stores

To the editor:

I didn't go to any of the hearings on the Heights. After all, the Advocate said they were only going to widen the sidewalks 6" and put in a couple planters.

I kept silent when at least 10 parking spaces disappeared from the center of the shopping district. I heard somewhere that one parking space in front of a store was worth \$15,000 a year in sales. If that's true, this project will cost Menotomy Pharmacy \$60,000 a year.

I grumbled to my wife when I saw granite curbstones going across Mass. Ave. Boy, those look like potholes waiting to happen. Besides, didn't we get rid of brick streets about 100 years ago?

Now our town fathers have arranged for loans for ailing merchants. I will state unequivocally it's nice that the Cambridge Savings Bank is doing this. Nevertheless, I would like to point out to our town fathers that loans have to be repaid with interest. That is not the same as sales which produce profits from which one derives income.

Charlie Lyons says "...perhaps

they wouldn't have made it any ways." What arrogance.

Ed Trembly
Wright Street

Brick sidewalks can prove dangerous

To the editor:
Walking on fancy brick sidewalks in Arlington Center may be fashionable but it is also almost as dangerous as driving there. I should know after a nasty fall there last Saturday afternoon.

It can happen to you just as it did to me. I know several good friends and neighbors who have quietly experienced the same fate. I feel it is time to warn others and hope they will be fortunate enough to enjoy walking on Mass. Avenue and arrive home safely!

Let's hope any concrete sidewalks in Arlington will never be replaced with bricks!

Betty Bane
Winslow Street

Lead abatement work appreciated

To the editor:

I am writing this letter in reference to the lead paint abatement at Menotomy Manor. After a two year wait, the abatement is well underway! This was a much-needed procedure for the health and safety of all the residents living in the development.

I would like to thank all those involved from the start for their insight, concern and hard work. A special thanks to those who brought this issue to the forefront of Town Meeting and worked so hard to see it funded in part by the town of Arlington.

In closing, it is nice to know that all of the children in the development and their families will not be at risk for lead paint poisoning and there are people in high places that do care.

Susan Butler
Menotomy Manor

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